ACTION: POL-1
INFO: AMB-1 RSO-1 DCM-1 ECON-1 EAO-1 CONS-1 USIS-1 SCI-1 DAO-1 FCS-1

DISTRIBUTION: POL
CHARGE: PROG

RELEASED IN PART
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VZCZCBU0682
PP RUEHBU
DE RUEHCV #6192/01 2092141
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 282140Z JUL 94
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9836
INFO RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES PRIORITY 0111
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 1982
RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA PRIORITY 0465
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO PRIORITY 9053
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0265
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 1741
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 0499
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 4818
RHLBAAA/USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PM
BT
C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CARACAS 06192

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PTER, PREL, ASEC, IR, AR, VE
SUBJECT: VENEZUELA EXPLORES POSSIBLE LOCAL HEZBOLLAH LINKS TO B.A. BOMBING

REF: A) QUITO 5475 B) CARACAS 5895 C) CARACAS 5777

1. (U) SUMMARY: THE ALMOST SIMULTANEOUS EXPULSION OF FIVE IRANIAN DIPLOMATS FROM CARACAS AND THE BUENOS AIRES BOMBING HAVE FOCUSED ATTENTION ON POSSIBLE HESBOLLAH CELL ACTIVITY IN VENEZUELA. THE EXISTENCE OF THE CELLS BECAME PUBLIC AFTER THE GOV EXPELLED FIVE IRANIAN DIPLOMATS LAST WEEK AFTER DISCOVERING A PLOT TO REPATRIATE A FAMILY OF KIDNAPPED IRANIAN REFUGEES. THE JUDGE INVESTIGATING THE THE BUENOS AIRES BOMBING CAME TO CARACAS TO INTERVIEW THE REFUGEES AND TALK TO GOV INTELLIGENCE. END SUMMARY

2. (C) AS REPORTED IN REFS B AND C, THE GOV EXPELLED FIVE IRANIAN EMBASSY OFFICIALS, INCLUDING THE IRANIAN AMBASSADOR, ON JULY 20, IN RESPONSE TO THE KIDNAPPING AND INTENDED REPATRIATION OF IRANIAN POLITICAL REFUGEE MANOUCHEHR MOATAMER, HIS WIFE AND FOUR CHILDREN. [redacted] B1 [redacted] TOLD THE EMBASSY THAT MOATAMER IS A FORMER IRANIAN HIGH GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL AND A CHRISTIAN. MOATAMER ESCAPED FROM IRAN TO TURKEY AND THEN TO CUBA. IN CUBA, HE AND HIS FAMILY WERE KIDNAPPED BY IRANIAN DIPLOMATS AND FLOWN TO CARACAS ON

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: ADOLPH H EISNER
CLASSIFICATION: CONFIDENTIAL REASON: 1.4(D)
DECLASSIFY AFTER: 27 JUL 2019
DATE/CASE ID: 12 MAR 2010 200906077

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JULY 9 WHERE THEY WERE HELD IN A HOTEL UNDER GUARD BY LOCAL IRANIAN OFFICIALS PENDING A PLANNED FORCED REPATRIATION TO IRAN. THE PLOT WAS FOILED ON JULY 11 WHEN MOATAMER ESCAPED AND FLED TO [redacted] B1 [redacted] RETURNED TO THE HOTEL WITH MOATAMER, AND THE IRANIAN GUARDS SCATTERED.

3. (U) SUBSEQUENT TO THE EXPULSION OF THE FIVE DIPLOMATS, THE FOREIGN MINISTRY SAID THE GOV IS INVESTIGATING TWO OTHER IRANIANS ASSOCIATED WITH THE IRANIAN MISSION IN CARACAS WHO HAD SIMILARLY BEEN INVOLVED IN "SUSPECT ACTIVITIES" IN VENEZUELA, SPECIFICALLY IN THE "PROPAGATION OF ISLAMIC CELLS" IN THE COUNTRY. THE MFA CITED THE MOSQUE IN PORLAMAR, MARGARITA ISLAND, AS THE LOCATION OF ONE SUCH CELL AND SAID THE EXPULSION OF DIPLOMATS MAY NOT BE OVER.

4. (U) THE WEEKEND OF JULY 23-24, THE ARGENTINE JUDGE CHARGED WITH INVESTIGATING THE BUENOS AIRES BOMBING, JUAN JOSE GALEANO, TRAVELED TO CARACAS WITH A DELEGATION TO QUESTION MOATAMER AND HIS FAMILY WHO WERE THEN UNDER GOV PROTECTION. ACCORDING TO THE PRESS, MOATAMER'S COMMENTS PROVIDED GALEANO WITH STRONG EVIDENCE OF IRANIAN COMPLICITY IN THE ATTACK. THE TEAM ALSO MET WITH OFFICIALS IN VENEZUELAN INTELLIGENCE ("DISIP") WHERE THEY RECEIVED A DETAILED REPORT ON THE ALLEGED EXISTENCE OF A HEZBOLLAH ORGANIZATION IN VENEZUELA. GALEANO WAS PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN IRANIAN ACTIVITIES IN VENEZUELA BECAUSE TWO OF THE DETAINED SUSPECTS IN BUENOS AIRES HAD PLANNED TO TRAVEL TO CARACAS IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE BOMBING. THE GOV TOLD THE ARGENTINE TEAM IT WAS VIGOROUSLY PURSUING ITS INVESTIGATION OF IRANIAN SUPPORTED GROUPS HERE.

5. (U) OUT OF CONCERN THAT CARACAS COULD BE TARGETED FOR HEZBOLLAH-SPONSORED BOMBINGS, THE CONFEDERATION OF ISRAELI ASSOCIATIONS IN VENEZUELA HAS REPORTEDLY ASKED THE GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE SECURITY FOR KEY ISRAELI-JEWISH SITES. ONE SPOKESMAN FOR THE LOCAL JEWISH COMMUNITY SAID THAT THREE MONTHS AGO THE ISRAELI EMBASSY PROVIDED DISIP WITH A REPORT INDICATING A POSSIBLE ESCALATION IN TERRORIST ACTIVITY BY MIDDLE EASTERN GROUPS IN LATIN AMERICA. THE REPORT ALLEGEDLY STATED THAT THE HEZBOLLAH INTENDED TO USE VENEZUELA AS A BASE FOR ACTIVITIES IN THE SO-CALLED "NORTHERN CONE OF AMERICA."

[redacted] B1

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